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COOKING THEIR FOOD, WITH A TOWEL ROUND HER HEAD.

Woman's Work in Japan.

(By Miss R. D. Howard, in 'Church Missionary Gleaner.')

At the present time, when Japan is seeking to take her place amongst the nations of the world, and is wondering how she can have the results of Christianity without Christianity itself, the work of the missionary is specially important, and there are many opportunities now which we should do well to seize whilst we have them.

A JAPANESE GIRL'S EDUCATION.

As is well known, the women in Japan are not secluded, as in many Eastern lands. They can mix freely with other people, but after they leave school their lives are often very dull and uninteresting. Education is now compulsory for both boys and girls, but the latter leave school earlier, and during the last part of the time much attention is given to learning dress-making, the preparation of ceremonial tea, and the ar-

rangement of flowers, of which our first picture is an illustration.

The two latter accomplishments are far more difficult than they sound to our uninitiated ears. Often the only furniture in a room consists of a vase of flowers, the arrangement of which visitors are expected to admire; and oh, how the poor stems are cut and bent and twisted till they bend in exactly the right way! Then the making of ceremonial tea—the slow, precise movements, the handling of everything in a certain way, the prescribed lapse of forty minutes before the tea is ready to be offered to the honored guest. Such is a great part of a girl's education!

HER MARRIED LIFE.

At seventeen she is generally married by arrangement to an almost unknown bridegroom, and goes to live with her mother-in-law, whom she is bound to respect. She is, in fact, the servant of the house, and must be always ready to attend to the needs of her husband or his parents. You can see her in the large picture cooking their food, with a towel round her head to keep the dust from her elaborately-arranged hair.

As she in her turn becomes a mother-in-law she is honored as she herself had to honor when young. She seldom goes out, unless it be in the spring, to see the plum and cherry blossom, or in the autumn, to see the chrysanthemums or maple, or to take part in some heathen festival. This is the life of hundreds of middle-class women in Japan. The poorer classes often work in the rice-fields with the men and draw or carry heavy loads.

THE WOMEN MUST BE VISITED IN THEIR HOMES.

It is evident, therefore, that unless we go to the women they will not come to us. Women are always at home, men seldom. Once during a Mission we went from house to house with tickets, which the women, for the most part, gratefully received; but it was their husbands and sons who came to the meetings. For visiting effectually great tact and patience are needed—tact that we may know when we are not wanted and what to say when we see that our presence is acceptable, and patience to put up with the slowness and seeming hindrances we so often have to meet.

For my own part I have found that since they discovered my liking for Japanese food and have invited me to meals with them, or asked me, when visiting, to share their meals, I have got closer to them than ever before. It has done more to bridge over the difference of nationality than numbers of ordinary calls.

GOD'S MESSAGE THROUGH A MELON PLANT.

To quote a few instances. Some years ago I used frequently to visit a woman, the wife of a Christian man, but at that time not herself a Christian.

One day she told me the following incident:—'I have a melon plant in my garden which has been the message of God to my soul. This plant was quite barren; it bore no fruit. One day my husband said to me, "This plant is just like you. You bear no fruit to God." I was very unhappy, and felt that it was true. After a time a neighbor was altering his garden, and had nowhere to put a very big stone, so asked if we would have it in our garden. The stone was, by chance, put down on this poor plant, and I thought "Well, there is an end of it now." What was my surprise, when after a time I saw some fresh leaves, then a bud appeared, and so on till there were five buds, which ripened into five beautiful melons. I thought, God can do for me what He has done for that plant. The very bruising of the roots seems to have quickened it into life, so perhaps God means to make my trials a blessing to me. I have five children, and they have been a great trouble to me; but I pray God to make them good and fruitful like the melons.'

After this we had many meetings in her house, and she and all her children were eventually baptized. They have gone to live in the North, but I have satisfactory accounts of them from time to time.

AN ENGINEER'S WIFE.

More recently a Christian teacher in one of our schools brought a friend to some of the weekly meetings for women, and asked me to go and visit her, which I did, with my Bible-woman. I have seldom met a more responsive woman or one who more eagerly imbided what she was taught. She was peculiarly lonely. Her husband, being an engineer on board ship, only came home two or three times a year for a day or two at a time; so, to use her own words, though married for a year she had hardly become acquainted with him. By her own request her baptism was postponed from Christmas Day (1897) till a few weeks later, in order that 'her heart might be more at leisure,' as the New Year is always a busy time for the Japanese. Truly Christianity has made a different woman of her.

Some Plain Words About Betting.

(By Robert E. Speer, in 'Forward.')

There are many boys and young men who think that betting is a bold and manly thing. They would not be gamblers for all the world, and they do not mean to do more than just bet a little 'in a friendly way.' Many of them have never stopped to enquire whether betting, even a litle 'in a friendly way,' is wrong or not. If they would stop to enquire, what would they find?

First of all, that betting is very foolish. A man who, in college, had lost so much money in betting that for one whole month he lived on crackers and water, until he could get some more money, told me once that he had stopped gambling, because he had found out that in the end the man who betted was sure to lose. He might win for a while; but sooner or later, it cost him so dearly that it paid to stop. Because betting is so foolish, the poor amateurs who gamble in stocks in Wall Street are called 'lambs' They are fleeced and devoured by professional wolves.

But that is a matter of policy. Betting is wrong as a matter of principle. The bettor who loses is making a wrong and immoral use of his money. Money is life. The price of blood is coined in the metal and woven in the paper. No man has a right to throw such life away. Losing it in a bet is waste. It is giving it away for no useful purpose.

If it is unmanly to spend money in betting, it is yet more wrong and immoral to gain money in this way. As Phillips Brooks says in his sermon on 'The Choice Young Man': 'In social life, in club, in college, on the street, the willingness of young men to give or to receive money on the mere turn of chance is a token of the decay of manliness and self-respect which is more alarming than almost anything else. It has an inherent baseness about it which, not to feel, shows a base soul. To carry in your pocket money which has become yours through no use of your manly powers, which has ceased to be another man's by no willing acceptance on his part of its equivalent, that is a degrading thing. Will it not burn the purse in which you hold it? Will it not blight the luxury for which you spend it? Will you dare to buy the gift of true love with it? Will you offer it in charity? Will you pay it out for the support of your innocent children? Will it not be a Judas's treasure, which you must not put into the treasury, because it is the price of blood?'

Of course, some men say that they do not bet for money. 'We do not care for the money.' Why then do they bet for money? Why not bet their money against buttons or marbles? That would show clearly that they did not bet for the money that might be won. Why do they bet, if not for money? 'Oh,' some say, 'I bet for the excitement.' But think how much more exciting it would be to bet dollars against buttons. Then if you won, you would only win buttons, but if you lost you would lose everything. This would greatly increase the excitement. No, it is not for the excitement men bet. It is for the money, in the hope of getting something in exchange for nothing. In that immoral and unmanly hope they will risk getting nothing in exchange for something.

But men try to justify their willingness to take or to lose money in this way by saying: 'We bet not money for the sake of money itself, but for the sake of showing where our sympathies are, and in order to back our college, or our team, or our political party.' That is not true. Men bet for money. Most bets are made in the hope of winning money. Many men bet against their own sympathies, because they think the other side is going to win. And even when it is true, what a squalid and pitiable way this is to show sympathy and to give support!

Gambling is wrong for the loser and wrong for the winner. The principle which usually underlies it is snobbery and conceit, for it rests on the assumption that the man who bets knows more, or that his opinion is better, than that of the man with whom he bets. If he does know more, then surely he is acting in a contemptible way in taking advantage of a more ignorant man to make money out of his ignorance. To say that the ignorant man is willing, or that he will not believe that he is ignorant, does not make matters better. It only makes more contemptible the conduct of the man, who, instead of protecting ignorance, takes a sharper's advantage of it.

Betting for little things is not right when betting for large things is wrong. Principles are principles. It does not matter through which end of a telescope you view them. What is wrong in the large is wrong in the small. Besides it is mean and ungentlemanly not to give gloves or candy or presents to those to whom you want to give them, instead of trying by a bet to get something for yourself, while at the same time appearing to be generous by offering to give if you lose.

Look at the effect of betting on the men who bet. See its result in the 'sporting man,' a man whose tastes have been so corroded that he no longer knows even how to dress as a gentleman. Betting fosters lies and deception and bluff. It leads men to use dishonest means to influence the result of the issue involved. It prostitutes life, killing its freshness and spontaneity. It warps and destroys the calm, just judgement and starts men on a road which runs always down and never upward. Have nothing whatever to do with it.

The Find-the-Place Almanac.

TEXTS IN GENESIS.

Jan. 7., Sun.—I will bless thee and thou shall be a blessing.
Jan. 8., Mon.—Is anything too hard for the Lord?
Jan. 9., Tues.—God will provide.
Jan. 10., Wed.—The Lord led me.
Jan. 11., Thurs.—Of all that Thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth to Thee.
Jan. 12., Fri.—Mizpah.
Jan. 13., Sat.—I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me.

BOYS AND GIRLS

Black Rock.

(A tale of the Selkirks, by Ralph Connor.)

CHAPTER I.

CHRISTMAS EVE IN A LUMBER CAMP.

It was due to a mysterious dispensation of Providence, and a good deal to Leslie Graeme, that I found myself in the heart of the Selkirks for my Christmas Eve as the year 1882 was dying. It had been my plan to spend my Christmas far away in Toronto, with such Bohemian and boon companions as could be found in that cosmopolitan and kindly city. But Leslie Graeme changed all that, for, discovering me in the village of Black Rock, with my traps all packed, waiting for the stage to start for the Landing, thirty miles away, he bore down upon me with resistless force, and I found myself recovering from my surprise only after we had gone in his lumber sleigh some six miles on our way to his camp up in the mountains. I was surprised and much delighted, though I would not allow him to think so, to find that his old-time power over me was still there. He could always in the old 'Varsity days—dear, wild days—make me do what he liked. He was so handsome and so reckless, brilliant in his class-work, and the prince of half-backs on the Rugby field, and with such power of fascination as would 'extract the heart out of a wheelbarrow,' as Barney Lundy used to say. And thus it was that I found myself just three weeks later—I was to have spent two or three days,—on the afternoon of the 24th of December, standing in Graeme's Lumber Camp No. 2, wondering at myself. But I did not regret my changed plans, for in those three weeks I had raided a cinnamon bear's den and had wakened up a grizzly—— But I shall let the grizzly finish the tale; he probably sees more humor in it than I.

The camp stood in a little clearing, and consisted of a group of three long, low shanties with smaller shacks near them, all built of heavy, unhewn logs, with door and window in each. The grub camp, with cook-shed attached, stood in the middle of the clearing; at a little distance was the sleeping-camp with the office built against it, and about a hundred yards away on the other side of the clearing stood the stables, and near them the smiddy. The mountains rose grandly on every side, throwing up their great peaks into the sky. The clearing in which the camp stood was hewn out of a dense pine forest that filled the valley and climbed half way up the mountain-sides, and then frayed out in scattered and stunted trees.

It was one of those wonderful Canadian winter days, bright, and with a touch of sharpness in the air that did not chill, but warmed the blood like draughts of wine. The men were up in the woods, and the shrill scream of the blue jay flashing across the open, the impudent chatter of the red squirrel from the top of the grub camp, and the pert chirp of the whisky-jack, hopping about on the rubbish-heap, with the long, lone cry of the wolf far down the valley, only made the silence felt the more.

As I stood drinking in with all my soul the glorious beauty and the silence of mountain and forest, with the Christmas feeling stealing into me, Graeme came out from his office, and, catching sight of me, called out, 'Glorious Christmas weather, old chap!' And then, coming nearer, 'Must you go to-morrow?'

'I fear so,' I replied, knowing well that the Christmas feeling was on him too.

'I wish I were going with you,' he said quietly.

I turned eagerly to persuade him, but at the look of suffering in his face the words died at my lips, for we both were thinking of the awful night of horror when all his bright, brilliant life crashed down about him in black ruin and shame. I could only throw my arm over his shoulder and stand silent beside him. A sudden jingle of bells roused him, and, giving himself a little shake, he exclaimed, 'There are the boys coming home.'

Soon the camp was filled with men talking, laughing, chaffing, like light-hearted boys.

'They are a little wild to-night,' said Graeme; 'and to-morrow they'll paint Black Rock red.'

Before many minutes had gone, the last teamster was 'washed up,' and all were standing about waiting impatiently for the cook's signal—the supper to-night was to be 'something of a feed'—when the sound of bells drew their attention to a light sleigh, drawn by a buckskin broncho coming down the hillside at a great pace.

'The preacher, I'll bet, by his driving,' said one of the men.

'Bedad, and it's him has the foine nose for turkey!' said Blaney, a good-natured, jovial Irishman.

'Yes, or for pay-day, more like,' said Keefe, a black-browed, villainous fellow-countryman of Blaney's, and, strange to say, his great friend.

Big Sandy M'Naughton, a Canadian Highlander from Glengarry, rose up in wrath. 'Bill Keefe,' said he, with deliberate emphasis, 'you'll just keep your dirty tongue off the minister; and as for your pay, it's little he sees of it, or any one else, except Mike Slavin, when you're too dry to wait for some one to treat you, or perhaps Father Ryan, when the fear of hell-fire is on to you.'

The men stood amazed at Sandy's sudden anger and length of speech.

'Bon; dat's good for you, my bully boy,' said Baptiste, a wiry little French-Canadian, Sandy's sworn ally and devoted admirer ever since the day when the big Scotsman, under great provocation, had knocked him clean off the dump into the river and then jumped in for him.

It was not till afterwards I learned the cause of Sandy's sudden wrath which urged him to such unwonted length of speech. It was not simply that the Presbyterian blood carried with it reverence for the minister and contempt for Baptists and Fenians, but that he had a vivid remembrance of how, only a month ago, the minister had got him out of Mike Slavin's saloon and out of the clutches of Keefe and Slavin and their gang of bloodsuckers.

Keefe started up with a curse. Baptiste sprang to Sandy's side, slapped him on the back, and called out, 'You keel him, I'll hit (eat) him up, me.'

It looked as if there might be a fight, when a harsh voice said in a low, savage tone, 'Stop your row, you blank fools; settle it, if you want to, somewhere else.' I turned, and was amazed to see old man Nelson, who was very seldom moved to speech.

There was a look of scorn on his hard, iron grey face, and of such settled fierceness as made me quite believe the tales I had heard of his deadly fights in the mines at the coast. Before any reply could be made, the minister drove up and called out in a cheery voice, 'Merry Christmas, boys! Hello, Sandy! Comment ca va, Baptiste? How do you do, Mr. Graeme?'

'First rate. Let me introduce my friend, Mr. Connor, sometime medical student, now artist, hunter, and tramp at large, but not a bad sort.'

'A man to be envied,' said the minister, smiling. 'I am glad to know any friend of Mr. Graeme's.'

I liked Mr. Craig from the first. He had good eyes that looked straight out at you, a clean-cut, strong face well set on his shoulders, and altogether an upstanding, manly bearing. He insisted on going with Sandy to the stables to see Dandy, his broncho, put up.

'Decent fellow,' said Graeme; 'but though he is good enough to his broncho, it is Sandy that's in his mind now.'

'Does he come out often? I mean, are you part of his parish, so to speak?'

'I have no doubt he thinks so; and I'm blowed if he doesn't make the Presbyterians of us think so too.' And he added after a pause, 'A dandy lot of parishioners we are for any man. There's Sandy, now, he would knock Keefe's head off as a kind of religious exercise; but to-morrow Keefe will be sober, and Sandy will be drunk as a lord, and the drunker he is the better Presbyterian he'll be, to the preacher's disgust.' Then after another pause he added bitterly, 'But it is not for me to throw rocks at Sandy; I am not the same kind of fool, but I am a fool of several other sorts.'

Then the cook came out and beat a tattoo on the bottom of a dish-pan. Baptiste answered with a yell: but though keenly hungry, no man would demean himself to do other than walk with apparent reluctance to his place at the table. At the further end of the camp was a big fireplace, and from the door to the fireplace extended the long board tables, covered with platters of turkey not too scientifically carved, dishes of potatoes, bowls of apple sauce, plates of butter, pies, and smaller dishes distributed at regular intervals. The lanterns hanging from the roof, and a row of candles stuck into the wall on either side by means of slit sticks, cast a dim, weird light over the scene.

There was a moment's silence, and at a nod from Graeme Mr. Craig rose and said, 'I don't know how you feel about it, men, but to me this looks good enough to be thankful for.'

'Fire ahead, sir,' called out a voice quite respectfully, and the minister bent his head and said—

'For Christ the Lord who came to save us, for all the love and goodness we have known, and for these Thy gifts to us this Christmas night, our Father, make us thankful. Amen.'

'Bon, dat's fuss rate,' said Baptiste. 'Seems lak dat's make me hit (eat) more better for sure,' and then no word was spoken for a quarter of an hour. The occasion was far too solemn and moments too precious for anything so empty as words. But when the white piles of bread and the brown piles of turkey had for a second time vanished, and after the last pie had disappeared, there came a pause and hush of expectancy, whereupon the cook and cookee, each bearing aloft a huge, blazing pudding, came forth.

'Hooray!' yelled Blaney, 'up wid yez!' and grabbing the cook by the shoulders from behind, he faced him about.

Mr. Craig was the first to respond, and seizing the cookee in the same way, called out, 'Squad, fall in! quick march!' In a moment every man was in the procession.

'Strike up, Batchees, ye little angel!' shouted Blaney, the appellation a concession to the minister's presence; and away went Baptiste in a rollicking French song with the English chorus—

'Then blow, ye winds, in the morning,
Blow, ye winds, ay oh!
Blow, ye winds, in the morning,
Blow, blow, blow.'

And at each 'blow' every boot came down with a thump on the plank floor that shook the solid roof. After the second round, Mr. Craig jumped upon the bench, and called out—

'Three cheers for Billy the cook!'

In the silence following the cheers Baptiste was heard to say, 'Bon! dat's mak me feel lak hit dat puddin' all hup meself, me.'

'Hear till the little baste!' said Blaney in disgust.

'Batchees,' remonstrated Sandy gravely, 'ye've more stomach than manners.'

'Fu sure! but de more stomach dat's more better for dis puddin',' replied the little Frenchman cheerfully.

After a time the tables were cleared and pushed back to the wall, and pipes were produced. In all attitudes suggestive of comfort the men disposed themselves in a wide circle about the fire, which now roared and crackled up the great wooden chimney hanging from the roof. The lumberman's hour of bliss had arrived. Even old man Nelson looked a shade less melancholy than usual as he sat alone, well away from the fire, smoking steadily and silently. When the second pipes were well a-going, one of the men took down a violin from the wall and handed it to Lachlan Campbell. There were two brothers Campbell just out from Argyil, typical Highlanders: Lachlan, dark, silent, melancholy, with the face of a mystic, and Angus, red-haired, quick, impulsive, and devoted to his brother, a devotion he thought proper to cover under biting, sarcastic speech.

Lachlan, after much protestation, interspersed with gibes from his brother, took the violin, and, in response to the call from all sides, struck up 'Lord Macdonald's Reel.' In a moment the floor was filled with dancers, whooping and cracking their fingers in the wildest manner. Then Baptiste did the 'Red River Jig,' a most intricate and difficult series of steps, the men keeping time to the music with hands and feet.

When the jig was finished, Sandy called for 'Lochaber No More'; but Campbell said, 'No, no! I cannot play that to-night. Mr. Craig will play.'

Craig took the violin, and at the first note I knew he was no ordinary player. I did not recognise the music, but it was soft and thrilling, and got in by the heart, till every one was thinking his tenderest and saddest thoughts.

After he had played two or three exquisite bits, he gave Campbell his violin, saying, 'Now, "Lochaber," Lachlan.'

Without a word Lachlan began, not 'Lochaber'—he was not ready for that yet—but 'The Flowers o' the Forest,' and from that wandered through 'Auld Robin Gray' and 'The Land o' the Leal,' and so got at last to that most soul-subduing of Scottish laments, 'Lochaber No More.' At the first strain, his brother, who had thrown himself on some blankets behind the fire, turned over on his face, feigning sleep. Sandy M'Naughton took his pipe out of his mouth, and sat up straight and stiff, staring into vacancy, and Graeme, beyond the fire, drew a short, sharp breath. We had often sat, Graeme and I, in our student-days, in the drawing-room at home, listening to his father wailing out 'Lochaber' upon the pipes, and I well knew that the awful minor strains were now eating their way into his soul.

Over and over again the Highlander played his lament. He had long since forgotten us, and was seeing visions of the hills and lochs and glens of his far-away native land, and making us, too, see strange things out of the dim past. I glanced at old man Nelson, and was startled at the eager, almost piteous, look in his eyes, and I wished Campbell would stop. Mr. Craig caught my eye, and, stepping over to Campbell, held out his hand for the violin. Lingeringly and lovingly the Highlander drew out the last strain, and silently gave the minister his instrument.

Without a moment's pause, and while the spell of 'Lochaber' was still upon us, the minister, with exquisite skill, fell into the refrain of that simple and beautiful camp-meeting hymn, 'The Sweet By and By.' After playing the verse through once, he sang softly the refrain. After the first verse, the men joined in the chorus; at first timidly, but by the time the third verse was reached they were shouting with throats full open, 'We shall meet on that beautiful shore.' When I looked at Nelson the eager light had gone out of his eyes, and in its place was a kind of determined hopelessness, as if in this new music he had no part.

After the voices had ceased, Mr. Craig played again the refrain, more and more softly and slowly; then laying the violin on Campbell's knees, he drew from his pocket his little Bible, and said—

'Men, with Mr. Graeme's permission, I want to read you something this Christmas Eve. You will all have heard it before, but you will like it none the less for that.'

His voice was soft, but clear and penetrating, as he read the eternal story of the angels and the shepherds and the Babe. And as he read, a slight motion of the hand or a glance of an eye made us see, as he was seeing, that whole radiant drama. The wonder, the timid joy, the tenderness, the mystery of it all, were borne in upon us with overpowering effect. He closed the book, and in the same low, clear voice went on to tell us how, in his home years ago, he used to stand on Christmas Eve listening in thrilling delight to his mother telling him the story, and how she used to make him see the shepherds and hear the sheep bleating near by, and how the sudden burst of glory used to make his heart jump.

'I used to be a little afraid of the angels, because a boy told me they were ghosts; but my mother told me better, and I didn't fear them any more. And the Baby, the dear little Baby—we all love a baby.' There was a quick, dry sob; it was from Nelson. 'I used to peek through under to see the little one in the straw, and wonder what things swaddling clothes were. Oh, it was all so real and so beautiful!' He paused, and I could hear the men breathing.

'But one Christmas Eve,' he went on, in a lower, sweeter tone, 'there was no one to tell me the story, and I grew to forget it, and went away to college, and learned to think that it was only a child's tale and was not for men. Then bad days came to me and worse, and I began to lose my grip of myself, of life, of hope, of goodness, till one black Christmas, in the slums of a far-away city, when I had given up all, and the devil's arms were about me, I heard the story again. And as I listened, with a bitter ache in my heart, for I had put it all behind me, I suddenly found myself peeking under the shepherd's arms with a child's wonder at the Baby in the straw. Then it came over me like great waves, that His name was Jesus, because it was He that should save men from their sins. Save! Save! The waves kept beating upon my ears, and before I knew, I had called out, "Oh! can He save me?" It was in a little mission meeting on one of the side streets, and they seemed to be used to that sort of thing there, for no one was surprised; and a young fellow leaned across the aisle to me and said, "Why! you just bet He can!" His surprise that I should doubt, his bright face and confident tone, gave me hope that perhaps it might be so. I held to that hope with all my soul, and'—stretching up his arms, and with a quick glow in his face and a little break in his voice, 'He hasn't failed me yet; not once, not once!'

He stopped quite short, and I felt a good deal like making a fool of myself, for in those days I had not made up my mind about these things. Graeme, poor old chap, was gazing at him with a sad yearning in his dark eyes; big Sandy was sitting very stiff, and staring harder than ever into the fire; Baptiste was trembling with excitement; Blaney was openly wiping the tears away. But the face that held my eyes was that of old man Nelson. It was white, fierce, hungry-looking, his sunken eyes burning, his lips parted as if to cry.

The minister went on. 'I didn't mean to tell you this, men, it all came over me with a rush; but it is true, every word, and not a word will I take back. And, what's more, I can tell you this, what He did for me He can do for any man, and it doesn't make any difference what's behind him, and'—leaning slightly forward, and with a little thrill of pathos vibrating in his voice—'O boys, why don't you give Him a chance at you? Without Him you'll never be the men you want to be, and you'll never get the better of that that's keeping some of you now from going back home. You know you'll never go back till you're the men you want to be.' Then, lifting up his face and throwing back his head, he said, as if to himself, 'Jesus! He shall save His people from their sins,' and then, 'Let us pray.'

Graeme leaned forward with his face in his hands; Baptiste and Blaney dropped on their knees; Sandy, the Campbells, and some others, stood up. Old man Nelson held his eyes steadily on the minister.

Only once before had I seen that look on a human face. A young fellow had broken through the ice on the river at home, and as the black water was dragging his fingers one by one from the slippery edges, there came over his face that same look. I used to wake up for many a night after in a sweat of horror, seeing the white face with its parting lips, and its piteous, dumb appeal, and the black water slowly sucking it down.

Nelson's face brought it all back; but during the prayer the face changed, and seemed to settle into resolve of some sort, stern, almost gloomy, as of a man with his last chance before him.

After the prayer Mr. Craig invited the men to a Christmas dinner next day in Black Rock. 'And because you are an independent lot, we'll charge you half a dollar for dinner and the evening show.' Then leaving a bundle of magazines and illustrated papers on the table—a godsend to the men—he said good-bye and went out.

I was to go with the minister, so I jumped into the sleigh first, and waited while he said good-bye to Graeme, who had been hard hit by the whole service, and seemed to want to say something. I heard Mr. Craig say cheerfully and confidently, 'It's a true bill: try Him.'

Sandy, who had been steadying Dandy while that interesting broncho was attempting with great success to balance himself on his hind legs, came to say good-bye. 'Come and see me first thing, Sandy.'

'Ay! I know; I'll see ye, Mr. Craig,' said Sandy earnestly, as Dandy dashed off at a full gallop across that clearing and over the bridge, steadying down when he reached the hill.

'Steady, you idiot!'

This was to Dandy, who had taken a sudden side spring into the deep snow, almost upsetting us. A man stepped out from the shadow. It was old man Nelson. He came straight to the sleigh, and, ignoring my presence completely, said—

'Mr. Craig, are you dead sure of this? Will it work?'

'Do you mean,' said Craig, taking him up promptly, 'can Jesus Christ save you from your sins and make a man of you?'

The old man nodded, keeping his hungry eyes on the other's face.

'Well, here's His message to you: "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."'

'To me? To me?' said the old man eagerly.

'Listen; this, too, is His Word: "Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out." That's for you, for here you are, coming.'

'You don't know me, Mr. Craig. I left my baby fifteen years ago because——'

'Stop!' said the minister. 'Don't tell me, at least not to-night; perhaps never. Tell Him who knows it all now, and who never betrays a secret. Have it out with Him. Don't be afraid to trust Him.'

Nelson looked at him, with his face quivering, and said in a husky voice, 'If this is no good, it's hell for me.'

'If it is no good,' replied Craig, almost sternly, 'it's hell for all of us.'

The old man straightened himself up, looked up at the stars, then back at Mr. Craig, then at me, and, drawing a deep breath, said, 'I'll try Him.' As he was turning away the minister touched him on the arm, and said quietly, 'Keep an eye on Sandy to-morrow.'

Nelson nodded, and we went on; but before we took the next turn I looked back and saw what brought a lump into my throat. It was old man Nelson on his knees in the snow, with his hands spread upward to the stars, and I wondered if there was any One above the stars, and nearer than the stars, who could see. And then the trees hid him from my sight.

(To be continued.)

Brief life is here our portion;
Brief sorrow, short-lived care,
The life that knows no ending,
The tearless life is there.

* * * * * * *

There grief is turned to pleasure;
Such pleasure, as below
No human voice can utter,
No human heart can know.
And after fleshly scandal
And after this world's might,
And after storm and whirlwind,
Is calm, and joy, and light;

* * * * * * *

The light that hath no evening,
The health that hath no sore,
The life that hath no ending
But lasteth evermore.

—Bernard of Cluny.

Cricket and Carving.

('The Christian.')

'You've got hold of the women, but I must do something for those lads who are always lounging about the place,' remarked my brother, one Saturday afternoon, as we were returning from a ride. 'They look as if they hadn't an interest in life, dawdling their time away like that,' pointing, as he spoke, to a knot of boys of fifteen, sixteen and seventeen, who were sheepishly watching us from a distance. A few minutes' silence, then he added, 'I have it—I'll manage it somehow, though it'll be a bit awkward to run, when I'm so busy; still, you must help,, and A— might help also, — mentioning a young friend who stayed with us just then. 'We'll have two things for them, one to keep their heads out of mischief on Saturday afternoons, and one to do the same on week nights.' By the first of these other 'things,' I found my brother meant a cricket club, with himself as president and captain and trainer. In a paddock belonging to the grounds of the old manor house where we were installed, there was space enough to allow of a good cricket pitch without annoyance to anyone. And this was forthwith handed over to the club which was to be.

In a month the club was an accomplished fact; and a very great boon it proved, not only to the lads, but to many of the older men in the village as well. Fives, rounders, bowls, hockey, and other games were gradually introduced, and the vicar was so greatly struck by the improvement in the street lounging, that this plan had caused, that he started prize-giving on his own account, to such an extent that the recreation club ran a danger of becoming utterly spoilt!

The other 'thing' which my brother had in his mind for the lads in the evenings was more of an experiment, and at first we were doubtful if we could get the boys to take an interest in the plan. Very simple lessons in wood-carving he had thought of, and this we tried to carry out—at first with very scant success; but, later on, with an abundant measure thereof. Both he and I could carve, and knew the fascination of the work when once entered upon, and we thought that if we could teach some of these village lads elementary carving we should not only be giving them a pleasant employment; but training them in eye and hand.

There was one drawback, however, to the plan, and that a serious one. Many tools would be needed. Tools were costly, and funds were not over-abundant among village lads. At least, the outfit for each boy would cost seven or eight shillings, and that would be quite beyond their powers. What should we do? Why not teach chip or Swedish carving, someone suggested, that only needs two or three tools, and since all the patterns are geometrical in design, the boys will be trained to greater accuracy of work. The force of this suggestion struck us both, and especially on the score of expense. We determined that the cost must be kept down as much as possible, and that it would be far better for simple work to be done, and done well and accurately, than to attempt anything very elaborate.

When next we rode over to the market town, not many miles distant, we went to a tool-maker and explained our needs. The latter, 'to oblige a class,' consented to make us the requisite chisels at a reduction in price, and accordingly we ordered a dozen 'spade' chisels, and a dozen 'veiners,' at ninepence each tool. With these two tools, let me say, it is marvellous how much and how good work can be done, and the exquisite results that may be obtained in the way of ornamental design. Twelve blocks of lime wood, a half inch thick and six inches square, costing sixpence each, were our next purchases, and a small hand-grindstone and oil-slip completed the lot. Two shillings accordingly covered the expense for each boy whom we taught, and by asking each of our pupils to pay twopence weekly during the twelve weeks that the class continued, we made the plan self-supporting. Compasses, pencils, and rulers we provided as common property. The designs I got from the School of Wood-Carving at South Kensington; the school publishes several sheets of these, graduated in complexity; and though, of course, it is perfectly easy, when the principle of chip carving is understood, to make one's own designs, these sheets save time and labor. I gummed them on to stiff cardboard, and cut them up, (as each sheet contained twenty or thirty designs).

We found it was much better to make every boy set out his designs with compass and ruler by himself, than to do it for him, and the first two lessons in carving that my brother gave to the twelve boys who formed the class were to give them a few simple rules and explanations as to the dividing up of circles and lines—in fact, the elements of geometry. Luckily, we had a magic-lantern, and, having hired some wood-carving slides, we were able to show the lads how they must begin, and what in the way of results they might hope to arrive at. Many more than twelve wanted to join the class, but we declined to teach more than these at a time, telling the others that they should have their turn when the three months was up, or perhaps, even, we might have a second class during the week. This last ultimately we did have. After a boy had covered his block of wood on both sides with designs, we let him try his hand on any box or stool or any other article which he could get hold of. Bellows, book covers, boxes, frames, etc., the lads covered with carving, and several of them got so proficient that they sold their work and got orders for more.

All through the winter, with strict regularity, the boys turned up on Thursday nights for their carving hour, occasionally whittling away a piece of their thumb or finger with the wood, but quite happy, for all that, especially as I had a stock of bandages and plaster on hand for such emergencies.

This wood-carving class did us good service in a deeper way than merely as a means of entertaining the village boys. By it we were able to get to know them individually and very well, and to win their love and respect. That won, the way was readily opened in many cases for more serious talk. We were able to draw them to attend a Bible-class, and to join us, when the shyness had worn off, in other religious gatherings.

Clever Ants.

Among the curious inhabitants of Australia are a species of termites called 'meridian ants,' because they invariably construct their long, narrow mounds so that the principal axis of the dwelling runs exactly north and south. These mounds, when viewed end on, show a remarkable resemblance to a many-spired cathedral.—'Children's Friend.'

A Hospital for Afflicted Tongues.

(By Mrs. O. S. Chapman, in 'Forward.')

'There goes another quarter of my pin money,' exclaimed Grace Marston, as she went to her drawer and counted out two ten cent pieces and a nickel, and dropped them into a box, evidently placed there for the purpose.

'I declare its too provoking to have such abominable rules in a school of civilized mortals; and the worst of it all is to leave the depositing of the fines with our consciences. I sometimes wish I hadn't any conscience at all.'

'Well,' replied her room mate, 'I, for one, am glad that Professor Hutchins has made such a law and that the penalty for violation is as severe as it is. I think it is very unpleasant to hear such a continual flow of slang from all directions and from freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors alike.'

'Oh, yes,' answered Grace, 'I suppose you feel grieved at such wickedness, and consider yourself infinitely superior to the rest of us, but Mary Long hasn't had a cent to pay, either, so you're not the only pebble on the beach. Oh, dear, there it goes again—another quarter!'

The bell for recreation cut short the dialogue, and instead of going out upon the lawn with the girls, Grace went back to her seat by the window, and, leaning her head back upon the cushion, closed her eyes and began counting her weeks' losses from' slang fines.

The figures seemed to assume mammoth proportions, and suddenly to start upon a gallop down the street, followed by the distracted girl, until, exhausted by the chase, she stopped upon a corner to rest.

'Good morning, Grace,' said a familiar voice, and, turning round, she saw Doctor Dowell, an old friend of her father's, coming down the steps of an imposing brownstone building, over the entrance of which she read the words, 'Hospital for Afflicted Tongues' in great blue letters.

'What a strange sign,' said Grace. 'What does it mean?'

'Just what it says,' said the doctor. 'I have been in consultation there for several hours—a most complicated case, of a child thirteen years old, too.' He went on gravely: 'Her first symptoms were noticed about a year ago. While coming from school one day, some remark from a friend seemed to affect her strangely, and suddenly her tongue became twisted in a curious manner, causing her to scream out, as they parted: "Go soak your head."'

'Her parents were distressed, and applied some gentle home remedies, but with little effect. Soon after she was heard, while in conversation with her sister to shout vehemently, "'You needn't think you're the only can in the alley." From that time to the present there has been a continuous growth of the disease, until she is now in the central ward of the hospital, and subjected to rigid treatment.

'By the way, Grace, wouldn't you like to go through the institution? I will gladly introduce you to the superintendent, Miss Heyworth, who is a most intelligent woman. She will explain to you the various methods used for effecting the cures.'

Full of curiosity, Grace readily assented, and was soon standing in a large, square hall, along the sides of which were upholstered and cushioned seats. Upon the walls were hung studies by artists of note, while books, games, and unfinished pieces of fancy work were scattered about in different parts of the room.

'This,' said Miss Heyworth, 'is the "reward room," and these young girls are happily awaiting the coming of parents or guardians to take them home. We hope not only the disease, but all tendency towards it has been permanently eradicated.'

THE DOCTOR BADE THE OFFENDER COME FORWARD AND CLIMB THE STEPS.

Leading the way through a succession of corridors, the superintendent stopped before a door, which was immediately opened by a man of severe but noble countenance, who courteously bade them enter.

In the center of the great room was a block of marble, pyramidal in shape, about ten feet in height, with steps leading to the top. Along the sides of the room were numberless booths or stalls, each with a closed door.

As they passed along, strange sounds could be heard, among which Grace recognized some of her own pet phrases—'She's a bute,' 'Oh, come off your perch,' 'Nit,' 'There are others,' and many more of like import.

Her heart beat very fast when the doctor opened the doors of several of the stalls, and she saw girls of her own age sitting upon stools in front of huge machines, and listening to the exact reproduction of their own words and tones repeated over and over again until their heads fairly ached with the babel of sound, and their hearts cried aloud for release.

In a corner booth sat a girl of perhaps

sixteen years of age, with sullen countenance. She kept her eyes sulkily on the floor, and the doctor, turning to the superintendent, said, 'I am fearful I shall be compelled to send Miss —— to the "Block." All means thus far used have failed to move her to endeavor.'

She stepped to the base of the great pyramidal piece and immediately a bell rang loudly, and every door of the stalls opened as if by magic, and every inmate looked out curiously. All sounds ceased, as in kind but firm tones the doctor bade the offender come forward and climb the steps. With a kind of bravado, and with head erect, the command was obeyed.

Doctor Dowell then raised his hand as a signal, and the poor girl, the center of all that sea of faces, began repeating the slang phrase she had last been guilty of using, 'Made a mash,' over and over again, while the silence all about her, and the eyes all upon her, made the scene painful in the extreme.

After a few moments her voice began to tremble, and then her head to droop; and finally, with tears rolling down her cheeks, and sobbing as though her heart would break, she stretched forth her hands pleadingly for forgiveness.

The doctor was quick in granting the pardon sought, and received her with words of encouragement, while the superintendent wound her arms about the repentant girl and led her from the room, leaving her audience with eyes blurred with tears.

Grace was quite overcome. When Miss Heyworth reappeared, she said to her; 'Don't you think that seems a pretty severe treatment for such a slight disease?'

'Yes, it may seem severe,' she replied, 'but this is the fourth month that this young woman has been here. She has persistently, and we believe wilfully, refused to act upon our prescriptions. This was a last resort, and it has never yet failed to effect a cure.

'I have known cases of a similar nature to produce grave alarm among the physicians in charge, because of the indifference shown, but I have never known a case dismissed without cure.

'The rules of the institution are ironclad. After a patient has once entered, her release depends entirely upon the verdict of the Board of Managers, and thus far the wisdom of this has been unquestioned.

'We have a boys' department in the annex; I will show you the "cleansing room' if you wish to see it.'

With this she tapped gently upon the door, which was opened by a tall man, who motioned them to seats. The sight within was startling, indeed, to Grace. There stood about twenty or thirty boys in a line, with heads bent over marble basins, while attendants ,under the eyes of a physician, were scrubbing out their mouths with swabs dipped in soapsuds, rinsing with cold water, and wiping with soft sponges.

The eyes of each patient were full of tears, and there was an air of depression everywhere.

It was too much for the tender, sympathetic heart of Grace Marston, and with trembling voice, she suggested going home.

Miss Heyworth noted her distress, and kindly explained the necessity for such rigid treatment.

'If the disease were allowed to develop,' she said, 'it would prove fatal not only to the well-being of the patient, but, being of a contagious character, would have a tendency to extend to others.

'But,' said she, 'you must not forget that these are extreme cases. You have not yet seen the first treatment which is very gentle. Each patient, upon entrance, is placed in the "home department," where for a month every inducement of a persuasive character is put forth, and not until it is found to be absolutely imperative are the sterner methods resorted to.'

By this time they had reached the entrance, and Grace was about to express her thanks and say good-by, when the superintendent, laying her hand upon her arm, said softly: 'You cannot go, my dear; Doctor Dowell has entered you for treatment."

'But I cannot stay,' pleaded Grace, and dashing forward, she seized the knob of the door, and tried in vain to open it

'You must,' answered Miss Heyworth firmly, and at once the portly form of the 'Home' physician appeared. But as he came toward her, Grace uttered a piercing scream and fell upon the floor at his feet.

It was nearly six o'clock as she opened her eyes, and found the gas burning brightly, and her room mate seated at the table studying.

'Oh, I have had such a horrible dream,' said Grace. 'I am so rejoiced to find myself here instead of there, and I assure you once and forever, that I am entirely cured of using slang.'

The Death of Namakei.

(From 'The Story of John G. Paton,')

In claiming Aniwa for Christ, and winning it as a small jewel for his crown, we had the experience which has ever marked God's path through history. He raised around us, and wonderfully endowed, men to carry on his own blessed work. Among these must be specially commemorated Namakei, the old chief of Aniwa. Slowly but steadily the light of the Gospel broke in upon his soul, and he was ever eager to communicate to his people all that he learned. In heathen days he was a cannibal and a great warrior, but from the first, as shown in the preceding chapters, he took a warm interest in us and our work. A little selfish, no doubt, at the beginning, but soon becoming purified, as his eyes and heart were opened, to the Gospel of Jesus.

* * * * * * *

When he heard of the prosperity of the Lord's work, and how island after island was learning to sing the praises of Jesus, his heart glowed, and he said, 'Missi, I am lifting up my head like a tree, I am growing tall with joy!' On the fourth or fifth day, however, he sent for me, out of the Synod, and when I came to him, he said to me eagerly, 'Missi, I am near to die! I have asked you to come and say farewell. Tell my daughter, my brother, and my people, to go on pleasing Jesus, and I will meet them again in the fair world.' I tried to encourage him, saying that God might raise him up again, and restore him to his people, but he faintly whispered, 'Oh, Missi, death is already touching me. I feel my feet going away from under me. Help me to lie down under the shade of that banyan tree.'

So saying, he seized my arm, we staggered near to the tree, and he lay down under its cool shade. He whispered again, 'I am going! Oh, Missi, let me hear your words rising up in prayer, and then my soul will be strong to go.' Amidst many choking sobs I tried to pray. At last he took my hand, pressed it to his heart, and said in a strong, clear tone, 'Oh, my Missi, my dear Missi, I go before you, but I will meet you again in the home of Jesus. Farewell!'

That was the last effort of dissolving strength, he immediately became unconscious and fell asleep. My heart felt like to break over him. He was my first Aniwan convert—the first who ever on that island of blood and tears opened his heart to Jesus; and as he lay there on the leaves and grass, my soul soared upward after his, and all the harps of God seemed to thrill with songs as Jesus presented to the Father this trophy of redeeming love. He had been our true and devoted friend and fellow-helper in the Gospel, and next morning all the members of our Synod followed his remains to the grave. There we stood, the white missionaries of the Cross from far distant lands, mingling our tears with Christian natives of Aneityum, and letting them fall over one who only a few years before was a blood-stained cannibal, and whom now we mourned as a brother, a saint, an apostle amongst his people. Ye ask an explanation? The Christ entered into his heart, and Namakei became a new creature. 'Behold I make all things new.'

Our Book Corner.

The Evangelical Publishing Co., (51 Lakeside Building, Chicago) publish a unique book of sacred songs entitled "Best Hymns No. 2." The special feature is a series of eighteen portraits and brief biographical sketches of well-known hymn writers. The music is simple and we are pleased to note many old favorites as well as some of the newer hymns such as 'I'll go where you want me to go,' 'The Comforter has come,' 'Jesus knows all about our struggles,' 'The cross is not greater than His grace,' 'Oh, it is wonderful.' Also some quite new hymns and tunes. (Different bindings, 15, 20 and 25 cents each).

Commentaries.

Arnold's Practical Sabbath-school Commentary for 1900, edited by Mrs. Arnold and Mrs. Abbie Morrow, contains the Lesson Text, Commentary, Practical Survey and Application, Questions, also a Blackboard lesson for each week and Hints to Primary teachers. Maps, Bible dictionary and a class Record are among the features which combine to make this an attractive and useful volume. (Revell Co., Toronto. Price $1.00)

'Peloubet's Select Notes' on the International Sunday-school Lessons is a yearly volume which has attained fame and popularity among the best equipped schools and teachers of these lessons. It is full of suggestive notes, illustrations and comments on the lesson text. Dr. Peloubet has acquired much skill in the art of making a Sabbath-school lesson interesting as the present volume, (the Twenty-sixth Annual) amply attests. (Revell Co., Toronto. Price $1.25).

Thank You and Yes, Please.

We thank those who are responding so kindly to our request to send their renewal subscriptions promptly. Those who delay involve the additional expense of time, postage, and stationary required to give them a second notification. In the aggregate this amounts to a heavy item. Our subscribers can scarcely realize what a great deal a little promptness on their part means to us, or they would all, as many are doing, send their subscriptions a little before the expiry of the old subscription, instead of behind time. Of course, the renewal always dates from the expiry of the old subscription, unless, indeed, the subscription is deferred too many days, when, according to our system, the name of such tardy subscriber is inevitably dropped from our mailing list. Some of our oldest and most regular subscribers are among those who delay sending their subscriptions, and in such cases it is particularly distressing to see their names dropped from the list.

We hope that every 'Messenger' reader will take the Daily or Weekly 'Witness' this year. Especially in such exciting times a reliable daily or weekly newspaper is a necessity.—The Editor.

LITTLE FOLKS

Archie's Mistake.

(From 'The Adviser.')

'Mary, where have you put the bottle of wine that was standing on the shelf in my room?' cried Mrs. Smith to her little maid-of-all-work. That had been a busy day with Mrs. Smith. It was house-cleaning time, and her bedroom had been turned upside down, and a half-year's dust dislodged, and now Mary had been despatched to get a cup of tea, while Mrs. Smith and her little daughter Maggie busied themselves dusting and re-arranging the furniture.

Nothing delighted Maggie more than this. She thought she was

a great help to her mother, as, indeed, so she was, with her bright cheery ways and her readiness to run for anything that was wanted. You would have thought it funny to see her deft little hands flourishing her small duster, and then, having rubbed up a chair, she would step back and say, 'Zat quite 'ike a 'ooking-gass.'

'Please, ma'am, I don't know,' said Mary, arriving hurriedly with a loaf in one hand and a huge knife in the other, having been interrupted in the act of cutting a plate of bread.

'Here it is, Mummy,' said Maggie, emerging from the depths of a dark closet, 'If it's the one the doctor said you was to take a glass of, when you was tired.'

'Ah, yes, child; how clever you are! hand it over and I'll take some just now,' said Mrs. Smith, 'for I am dog-tired. But,' she immediately exclaimed, 'it's empty! Why, what have you done with it, Maggie?'

'Nosing,' said the little creature, shaking her head; 'Maggie did nosing wif it.'

Mrs. Smith looked at Mary, but it was evident she had no clue to the mystery.

'Never mind,' said she, 'we shall have our tea and that will be better.' The tea was delightful, as what meal is not when you feel you have earned it by a good spell of hard work. Maggie drank hers from a little cup and saucer her father had brought her the last time he was in town. The cup had a pretty wreath of flowers round the edge, and inside that the words, 'The cup that cheers but not inebriates.'

Maggie did not understand what that meant, but her father explained that some drinks people used made them stupid and sad and noisy and often irritable, and sometimes even dangerous, while what she would drink from her cup would make her feel happy and pleasant.

'But what has come of Archie?' said Mrs. Smith.

Maggie immediately jumped from her chair and ran off to look for her brother.

'Oh, Mummy!' she cried coming back, 'Archie is lying in the back passage, and he won't neiner speak nor move.'

Mrs. Smith went to see for herself, and there, sure enough, was poor Archie, lying like a log, and deaf to everything she could say.

What a fright they all got. And what do you think was the cause of it?

When he came to himself, as he did in the course of some hours, although still having a splitting headache, he told them that as he was exploring in his mother's room he came on the bottle the doctor had told her to take when tired, and, thinking he would like to try it, drank it all off, and remembered nothing more.

'But catch me,' said he, 'ever tasting anything of the kind again.'

'Or me either,' said his mother.

'Or me eiser,' echoed Maggie.

When Mr. Smith came home that night Maggie ran to him, saying she was always going to drink out of the cup he gave her, and never be stupid or sad.

'Yes, my pet,' he returned, kissing her, 'and I wish everybody were of the same mind.'

Armor-Plated Boys.

It is important in these days that there should be armor-plated boys. A boy needs to be iron-clad on

His lips—against the first taste of liquor.

His ears—against impure words.

His hands — against wrong-doing.

His heart—against irreverence and doubt.

His feet—against going with bad company.

His eyes — against dangerous books and pictures.

His pocket—against dishonest money.

His tongue—against evil speaking.

The Christian armor on her citizens gives more security to the nation than all the armor plate can on her ships.—'Christian Guardian.'

How Rags Paid for His Supper

Yes, Rags, that was his name, the most wretched, half-starved cur that you could possibly imagine. He had no home, except the cold, pitiless streets; his food old, dirty crusts and bones found in the gutter. Cruel people flung stones at him, and life was one long, hideous misery. Such a pity, too, for Rags, being a retriever, would have repaid anybody for their trouble and his keep.

Well, it was Christmas Eve, and the poor dog felt nearly frozen to death as well as, oh, so hungry. Crusts and bones had seemed fewer that day than usual, and now it was night, and the bitter east wind made him shiver and tremble in every limb. Rags crept down a road with tall houses on each side, and at last stopped to listen outside one brilliant with lights. A children's party was going on inside, and Rags slunk in through the gate into the front garden, intending to go round to the back premises, and see if he could find old bones lying about. Mary Moore, the little girl of the house, looking out of the window, saw the poor animal.

'Oh, dear mother,' she cried, 'do look at this poor doggie! May I give him a plateful of those cocoanut biscuits?'

Everybody in the party laughed at Mary's idea of food for a great hungry retriever, but Mary was only three years old, and did not know any better.

'No,' said her mother kindly; 'but you shall give him a plateful of scraps that cook will give you.'

Mary soon was feeding poor Rags in the warm kitchen.

'You shall stay here to-night, poor fellow,' said Mary's father.

'Fire, fire, fire.'

That was the awful cry that rang through the house at dead of night.

The house was full of smoke and crackling flames. Mr. Moore carried his little girl safely through the fire to a friend's house, then fetched his wife. The servants were saved by the brave firemen who had arrived; but, somehow, they all forgot the baby—the darling baby-boy, lying fast asleep in his cot.

'Oh, my baby, my boy!' Mrs. Moore screamed, wringing her hands together in agony. 'Will no one save my child?'

'It would be certain death to anyone who attempted to enter the house again,' said the Captain of the Brigade.

But as he spoke a great shout arose from the people, for there, leaping out of a window, came Rags, dragging something white in his mouth. Yes, it was the baby in his night-shirt. Rags had brought him, but very little burned, safe through the fire. Don't you think that Rags paid for his supper?—'Band of Mercy.'

How Janet Was Cured.

It was the uneasy time of day. It was likewise the time when the hands of the clock went around altogether too fast to suit Janet.

'You seem to love to say it's my bedtime,' she said, looking crossly at the big clock. 'I wish I could sit up once in a while and see what a good time the grown folks have after we have gone to bed.'

'We' meant Janet and her dolls.

'You can sit up to-night if you wish, just as long as you like,' said Janet's mother.

'Truly?' asked Janet.

'Truly,' said her mother.

'Oh, thank you, mamma. Won't we have a good time, though?'

Then she went to tell the dolls.

'Dear ones,' she said when she had collected them together, 'I know and I long have known just how you feel about going to bed so early. So to-night you shall sit up just as long as you like, and we will see for ourselves just what good times the grown-up people have.'

Then they all went down-stairs to the library, where the family were. It was very quiet there, Janet thought. The older children were studying their lessons for the next day, grouped around the long table in the middle of the room, and her father and mother were reading.

'Do tell me a long story, please, mamma,' said Janet, bringing her little chair up beside her mother's; but her mother shook her head.

'It would disturb the children studying,' she said.

'Can I have an opera with my dolls?'

'No, dear.'

'Isn't there anything to amuse me?' and there were tears in Janet's voice.

'No, little daughter, this is the quiet hour for the grown people and you will have to keep still.'

So Janet sat down and looked soberly at the fire.

By and by her head rested against her mother's knee.

'I don't think grown folks—' she began, and that was all, until her father was carrying her upstairs—'have a very good time at all,' she murmured sleepily.

Since then she goes to bed cheerfully.

'For it's really better for all of us, my dears,' she told the dolls.—L. E. Chittenden, in 'Youth's Companion.'

Polly's Year.

January 1st.

Come sit in my lap and let me hear,
Polly, my dear, Polly, my dear,
What do you mean to do this year?

I mean to be good the whole year long,
And never do anything careless or wrong.
I mean to be good the whole year right,
And do all my sums, if I sit up all night.
I mean to keep all my frocks so clean,
Nurse will never say I'm 'not fit to be seen.'
I don't mean to break even one of my toys,
And I never, oh! never, will make any noise.
In short, Uncle Ned, as you'll very soon see,
The best little girl in the world I shall be!

December 31st.

Come sit in my lap and let me hear,
Polly, my dear, Polly, my dear,
What you have done in the course of the year.

Oh dear! Uncle Ned, oh dear and oh dear!
I fear it has not been a very good year.
For somehow my sums would come out wrong,
And somehow my frocks wouldn't stay clean long.
And somehow I've often been dreadfully cross,
And somehow I broke my new rocking-horse.
And somehow nurse says I have made such a noise
I might just as well have been one of the boys.
In short, Uncle Ned, I very much fear
You must wait for my goodness another year!

—'Youth's Companion.'

LESSON II.—JANUARY 14.

The Child Jesus Visits Jerusalem.

Luke II., 41-52. Memory verses 49-52. Read Matt. II.; Luke II., 21-38.

Daily Readings.

M. Purification. Le. 12: 1-8.
T. Into Egypt. Mt. 2: 13-18.
W. Magi's Visit. Mt. 2: 1-12.
T. Into Egypt. Mt. 2: 12-'8.
F. Out Again. Mt. 2: 19-33.
S. Into Galilee. Lk. 2: 33-40.

Golden Text.

'And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.'—Luke II., 52.

Lesson Text.

Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. (42.) And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. (43.) And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. (44.) But they, supposing him to be in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. (45.) And when they found him not they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. (46.) And it came to pass that after three days they found him in the temple sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. (47.) And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. (48.) And when they saw him they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. (49.) And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? (50.) And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. (51.) And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. (52.) And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

Suggestions.

(From 'Practical Commentary' for 1896.)

Luke ii., 41. His parents went to Jerusalem.—The celebration lasted seven days, from the fifteenth day of Nisan. Every Israelite was bound to be present, except such as were unable to perform the necessary journey, viz., the sick, the aged, and boys under the age of twelve years, who, as well as the blind, the deaf, the lunatic, were permitted to remain at home. Every Jewish child of twelve years old was permitted as 'a son of the law' to take part in the celebration of the sacred festival; women were by no means obliged to go up to the feast.—Lange.

42. He was twelve years old.—At this age he was put under a course of instruction, and trained to fasting and attendance on public worship, besides being set to learn a trade.—J. F. & B. 43. Had fulfilled the days.—Eight days in all; one was the passover, and the other seven the days of unleavened bread. Jesus tarried behind—not because he was loath to go home, or shy of his parents' company, but because he had business to do there, and would let his parents know that he had a Father in heaven of whom he was to be observant, more than of them; and respect to him must not be construed disrespect to them.—Com. Com.

Supposing him to have been in the company.—On these sacred journeys, whole villages and districts travelled in groups together, partly for protection, partly for company.—J. F. & B. went a day's journey. —Expecting that he would join them when they lodged for the night. His mother was accustomed to trust to his obedience and wisdom, and would not think it necessary to watch him. 46. After three days.—We must allow one day for their departure, vs. 44; one for their return, vs. 45; and the third, vs. 46, for their search; and that they found him in the sanctuary at the close of the latter.—Lange.

In the temple.—Probably in one of the porches of the Court of the women, where the schools of the Rabbis were held, and the law regularly expounded.—Lange. Doctors—teachers of the law. Hearing, asking.—The method of question and answer was the customary form of rabbinical teaching: teacher and learner becoming by turns questioner and answerer.—J. F. & B. Jesus was not only filled with wisdom, but he had a desire to increase it, and a readiness to communicate it.

47. Were astonished.—His wisdom and understanding appeared as much in his questions as his answers. They did not expect so much from a child. 48. They were amazed—to find Jesus among the teachers, and to find he had so much respect shown him. Thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.—Not merely the only possible manner in which Mary could publicly speak to her son of Joseph, but also an indisputable proof of the wisdom with which she brought up the child; a wisdom which taught her to say nothing yet to him of the mystery of his birth, and which had faith enough to wait, until his own consciousness should be fully and clearly awakened to the fact of his being the Son of God. The more surprising therefore, must his answer have seemed to his mother, as containing a hint, intelligible to her alone, that he already knew who his Father was.—Lange.

49. How is it that ye sought me?—He appeared astonished that Mary should think of him as being in any other place, or at any other work, if she understood so well his real relation and mission. Perhaps this very question awakened his intuition that he was the Son of God. About my Father's business—my Father's affairs or interests. In this Jesus declares God to be his Father.

50. They understood not—how Jesus was made aware of his real divinity, since they had not made it known to him, neither had he learned it from the doctors. Neither did they understand why he should be separated from them then. Here their minds were slow to understand the dealings of God. Their minds would picture a different way for the Messiah.

He went down with them. . . and was subject unto them.—This glimpse of his glory was to be short; it was now over, and he did not urge his parents either to come and settle at Jerusalem, or to settle him there, but very willingly retired into Nazareth, where he lived for many years in obscurity. Doubtless he came up to Jerusalem, to worship at the feasts, three times a year.—Com. Com.

His mother kept all these sayings in her heart.—This visit to Jerusalem marked a great change in the life of Jesus. His wonderful development during the quiet life of twelve years in Nazareth, had been a delight to Mary. Her heart had been full of strange hopes, but now the words of her son at this time, gave her new thoughts to ponder. She kept them as treasures, expecting some day to know all their meaning. 'From this time we have no more mention of Joseph. The next we hear is of his mother and brethren,' (John 2: 12) whence it is inferred, that between this time and the commencement of our Lord's public life, Joseph died, having now served the double end of being the protector of our Lord's Virgin-mother, and affording himself the opportunity of presenting Jesus the opportunity of presenting a matchless pattern of subjection to both parents.'—Alford.

52. Jesus increased in wisdom and stature.—Though the eternal Word was united to the human soul from his conception, yet the Divinity that dwelt in him, manifested itself to his humanity by degrees, in proportion to his capacity: as the faculties of his human soul grew more and more capable, the gifts it received from the divine nature, were more and more communicated.—Com. Com. —in favor with God and man.—In all those graces that rendered him acceptable both to God and man.

Questions.—What feast did Joseph and Mary attend at Jerusalem? Where was their home? Why did Jesus wait until he was twelve years old before attending the passover? How long did the feast last? What did Jesus do? How far did Joseph and Mary go without Jesus? When did they find him? Where? What doing? What did Mary say to him? What did his answer mean? Did Jesus return to Nazareth? What was the manner of his conduct? How did he develop? What business was he doing for God at the temple? How did Mary receive his words?

Teachings.—Children should be taught to attend public worship, and instructed in the ways of salvation. If we would find Christ we must seek him earnestly. Our first business should be to serve God. Obedience to parents is an important lesson. We can be all that God wants us to be even in our homes. We should become stronger Christians daily.

Suggested Hymns.

'By Cool Siloam,' 'Far above in higher Heaven,' 'Come to the Saviour,' 'Trust and obey,' 'I think when I read,' 'Little ones like me.'

Junior C. E Topic.

Daily Readings.

Mon., Jan. 8.—Blind eyes. Matt. 6: 23.
Tues., Jan. 9.—Closed ears. Luke 6: 49.
Wed., Jan. 10.—Misguided feet. Ps. 78: 10.
Thu., Jan. 11.—Eyes for God's Word. Ps. 119: 18.
Fri., Jan. 12.—Ears to hear. Isa. 55: 3.
Sat. Jan. 13.—Walking in God's way. Ps. 1: 1.
Sun., Jan. 14.—Topic—Ways of losing God and ways of finding Him. Luke 15: 11-24.

Opium Catechism.

(By Dr. R. H. McDonald, of San Francisco.)

CHAPTER VI.—CURE FOR THE OPIUM HABIT.

1. Q.—Cannot a person leave off the habit of his own accord if he nerves himself to do it?

A.—It is almost impossible. So great is the torture of body and mind to an opium inebriate deprived of opium, he will commit suicide if he can; it is idle to think that he will deny himself the drug if he can get it, and inhuman to lock him up without giving him something to relieve his sufferings.

2. Q.—Is there any real substitute for opium?

A.—There is really none; but drugs less harmful, have proved helps to the system, and aided it to overcome the habit altogether in time.

3. Q.—What is one of the best simple helps?

A.—A hot bath, as it aids in removing the poison from the system, bathes the outer nerves in a soothing fluid, and warms the body.

4. Q.—How can the vomiting and diarrhoea be checked?

A.—Small quantities of beef peptonoids, acidulated with a weak solution of phosphoric acid, usually check vomiting, and the diarrhoea generally yields to hot water enemata.

5. Q.—What class of drugs is most widely used by physicians in curing the opium habit?

A.—The bromides. They promote sleep, relieve pain, and tide the patient over the worst period; but they are weakening, and should not be long continued.

6. Q.—What does Dr. Asa P. Meylert say of the treatment of opium eaters?

A.—He says that no other disease known to man requires such varied treatment as this.

7. Q.—What drugs does he recommend?

A.—Quinine and cannibas indica, though quinine lowers the temperature and should be accompanied by warm tonics, that contain no alcohol.

8. Q.—What does Dr. Meylert say of treat-

ing those who suffer from alcoholic as well as opium intemperance?

A.—He says he always breaks up the drinking habit first, as alcoholic stimulants are worthless in treating or curing the opium habit.

9. Q.—Is it wise to continue the use of any single narcotic in treating opium patients?

A.—No, the treatment should be changed constantly, as relief follows more surely than when any one narcotic is used continuously.

10. Q.—What tonics are required after the habit is broken?

A.—Iron, quinine, cod-liver oil, calumba, gentian, and later, pepsin, pancreatin, etc.

11. Q.—Is an opium patient ever competent to treat himself at any stage of the cure?

A.—Never; he requires a physician, and especially a firm, patient, cheerful nurse. He should never be informed what he is taking or how much; his attention should be diverted to books, music, pictures, and pleasant conversation. He should be kept in a warm, well-ventilated room, and refrain from taking exercise until he has learned to eat and sleep well.

The Curse of Africa.

The temperance lecture to Englishmen in the Dark Continent—it runs to forty lines of small newspaper type—which so experienced a resident in Tropical Africa as Sir H. H. Johnston includes in his interesting report, is, unfortunately, only too much needed:—'The chief bane of British Central Africa (says Her Majesty's Commissioner) is that accursed spirit, whiskey. It is whiskey which is at the bottom of much of our ill-health; it is whiskey which is answerable for many of our deaths. The individual whose system is permeated with alcohol has hardly a chance.' No one acquainted with the habits of a number of the Europeans in Zambesia can be in any doubt whatever that far too much liquor is drunk, and that 'fever' is made to bear the responsibility for many deaths for which spirits are largely answerable. It is the old story from India over again: 'They eats and they drinks, and they drinks and they eats, and they dies, and then they writes home and says the climate killed 'em.'—'Westminster Gazette.'

Cigarette Smoking.

The girls in Canton have formed a League, the object of which is to break up cigarette smoking among their boy friends. In Lansing, Mich., Superintendent Laird and others made a systematic canvass of the school, and the habit of using tobacco was found to have been formed by many boys. Some of them had gone so far as to forge their parents' names in order to procure the weed. Evidence is being secured for the arrest of dealers who violate the law in selling to youths under seventeen years of age. Investigation always leads to a knowledge of violated law, but it is the old story of locking the stable a few times after the horse is stolen. No observing person can fail to know that the law in this respect is violated constantly. It is no uncommon thing in almost any town or city to see boys smoking and chewing. The ruin of the child is the price of the parents' negligence. A principal in Chicago says the sale of cigarettes to children has been steadily increasing, and that she actually discovered a boy of eleven years smoking in her office, his desire to smoke being so strong that he ran the risk of indulging even there. Superintendent Laird, of Lansing, said that he knew of instances where boys, naturally bright, had become stupid and indolent to such an extent they could not keep up in their studies, and their falling off in mental ability, he believed can be directly traced to cigarettes. This is the testimony from Maine to Georgia, and yet measures against their use in the public schools, accompanied by vigorous prosecution of the sellers, are only occasional and spasmodic. The fact is, too many superintendents and principals use the weed themselves, and will not take hold vigorously of preventive measures nor support the under teachers in doing so. The use of tobacco and intoxicating liquors ought to disqualify for the office of teacher in any grade whatever.—'Union Signal.'

Correspondence

Victoria Harbor, N.S.

Dear Editor,—I live on a farm on the North Mountain; about one and a half miles from the Bay of Fundy. It is a very pleasant place in summer. There was a great deal of ice in the bay this winter, and, when the sun shone it looked very pretty.

EVA L., aged 10.

Gloucester, Ont.

Dear Editor,—I live in the county of Carleton. I had one rabbit, but it died, and so I have none now. My brother has three, and he is going to give me one. I have never tasted liquor, and never intend to.

BAYNE U., aged 9.

Mountain Dale, N.B.

Dear Editor,—I am piecing a quilt which will have 160 squares when it is finished.

ESTELLA E., aged 12.

St. John, N.B.

Dear Editor,—I live in St. John, near the Park. There is a lake in the Park. We skate there in winter, and go out rowing in summer.

BERTON M. C., aged 8.

South Durham.

Dear Editor,—I live in a small village about sixty-six miles east of Montreal. There are about forty-five dwelling houses, five stores, three blacksmith shops, a creamery, and a hotel, also one of the largest gravel-pits in the Eastern Townships. It has always supplied ballast for the G. T. R. from Montreal to Sherbrooke. We have a good model school, with two teachers. We have had several entertainments in our school, and have bought a nice library with the proceeds. I go to Sunday-school with my brother and two little sisters. My mother commenced taking the 'Messenger' when it was first published.

JEAN, aged 11.

McLellan's Brook, N.S.

Dear Editor,—We have taken the 'Messenger' for a long time, and now do not think we could do without it. I am going to tell you about a cave that is not far from where I live. It is at the foot of a little hill, and by stooping you can enter the dark retreat. It is on an average six feet wide, and about one hundred feet in length; but there are other passages that have never been explored. When you go in you have to crawl along a ledge. It looks as if it were cut out with the human hand; but this cannot be so. A stream of clear water flows along the floor; but it can be easily drained. There used to be a cup at the mouth, to drink with. A man named Peter Fraser used to live in this cave; but it was too damp, and he had to build a house, and then he used it for keeping apples in.

ALBERT F., aged 13.

Wallace Bay, N.S.

Dear Editor,—We are pleased to have the Sunday-school lessons in the 'Messenger.' We read one of the readings each evening, verse about, at family worship. On Sunday we have the lesson, papa, mamma, aunt Susie, my two brothers, and myself, and sometimes our cousins, who live near us, come in and help.

We enjoy reading the pieces on temperance and about tobacco, very much too. My papa never used tobacco, and we boys are none of us going to use it either, and when we get big, we will vote for prohibition.

We sent to the 'Witness' Office for 'In His Steps,' and have finished reading it. We took turns in the evening, reading it aloud. We liked it very much, and would like to read the rest of Mr. Sheldon's books. Now we are reading the 'Bonnie Brier Bush,' in the same way. My aunt Susie has taken the 'Witness' for a long time. She read the 'Bonnie Brier Bush' in it, and told us about it, and wanted us to read it, too. We liked it.

We have some beautiful pink roses although the weather has been so cold, our house plants grow and blossom nicely in the winter. We have one house rosebush, twelve years old.

H. M. P., aged 10.

Franklin, Man.

Dear Editor,—I like reading the 'Messenger' very much. We don't know who sends it to us; but we are very glad to get it. My father is a farmer. I have no pets; but there is a butcher-bird that comes, and we feed it with meat, outside on a box. As soon as we go away, he comes and eats some, and flies away with some. A little chick-a-dee flew in one day when papa opened the door, and we caught it and put it in a cage. But it was so small that it got out and flew away.

DAISY FLORENCE, aged 10.

Middle Musquodoboit, N.S.

Dear Editor,—I live in the country about thirty miles from Truro. Papa is going to pay my brother and me for splitting wood. Papa is a merchant; but I would rather live on a farm. There are two churches here and no saloons. We have about a quarter of a mile to go to school, and in the winter we have great fun wading through the snowbanks. I belong to the Band of Hope, and when I get old enough I am going to join the division of the Sons of Temperance.

HARRY W. A., aged 10.

Perth, Ont.

Dear Editor,—I have lived with my grandmother for four years. I had a sprained ankle recently, and had to stay in for five weeks. It was bandaged up pretty tight, and at times was very sore. I had to sit with my foot up on a chair, it was not very nice to have to sit still so long.

DAVID, aged 10.

Ladle Cove, Nfld.

Dear Editor,—I am a little boy nine years of age. I have no real brother or sister; but I have four half-brothers and three half-sisters. One sister lives in Montreal, and sends me your paper. I am very fond of them, and they all love me. I have never seen a city; but when I grow up I hope to see your city. We are fishers, and I think it quite nice, because Christ chose fishermen for his disciples. Father has a cod-trap, it has a door and sides and a bottom.

ARCHIE H.

Polar, Wis.

Dear Editor,—I live at Polar, in the State of Wisconsin. This is a lovely place in the summer, but very cold in winter. We have two Indian ponies. My papa is a lumberman. This isn't very much of a city, only a store and post-office, a boarding-house, and some houses that our men live in. I love to live here, though, the air is so fresh and pure; and in the spring and summer the woods are filled with flowers, and the fields with berries. I have a cousin in Milwaukee about my age, who visits me every summer, and we have lots of fun. I used to live in Canada long ago; but I like to live here best, although I like to go there visiting sometimes.

VERA W., aged 12.

Messenger Letter Writers.

We have still quite a number of 1899 letters on hand. Among those who have lately written are:—Harry C. M., Nellie, Eva May McCutcheon, Myrtle W. S., Clara Wilson, A Reader, Amelia Owens, Lorne Campbell, Devena, M. L. Hills, Vance D. Angus, Norrey W., Agnes Faulknor, Bessie A., Loyde P., Flora T., Maggie W., Edith S., Bloye Bagsley, Miller Morrow, Bessie McLean, Robert A. Brodley, Blanche B. Barnes, Ina Trott, Lena M. P., Sadie McFadyen, Harold B. R., Phoebe Emerson, Florence Matthews, Eva Friggens, Stella L., Jessie C. D., Lizzie K., Maggie Mitchell, Clara Johns, W. L. Gray, H.G.G., Allan B., Nellie F., Rose Wainman, Mabelle Fraser, Rose Williams, H. M., H. T. Weaver, Earl Coffin, Mildred MacDorman, Amy Almquist, N.J.S., Rod Neilson, Ella Lawson, J. Alastair Forbes, Olive E. Holmes, Sybil, Robert, Edith Cains, J.H.B., Georgie E. E., Bernice V., P.W., Beulah M., Reggie McClelland, Adeline Gladys Young, May Hilton, Muriel, Gordon Blue, Mamie Sproat, Donald, Mary V. M., Cuthbert A., Marjory Hoig, Nellie, Greenleaf, N.C.O., Florrie T. Palmeter, Isa L., Mary B. M., Gordon Travis, Pearl S., Freddie N. H., Ina McMullen, C. D. Paddleford, Della, Barbara Leitch, J.M.C., Hattie Gaines, and some others.

HOUSEHOLD.

Teaching Self-Government.

A writer in the New York 'Times' says that a mother who is bringing up her little girl with the greatest care, and is making an effort to educate her up to the best social and economic standards, began to give her an allowance of ten cents a week when she was six years old, and now that she is eight she gives her fifteen cents. With this money the child buys herself little luxuries and small things that she needs, and makes presents if she wishes.

It was not long after the little allowance had begun that the mother had a birthday. The small girl had no money, but she wished to make her mother a present. She went to her about it.

'Mamma,' she said, 'I would like so much to make you a present, but I haven't any money.' 'But you have had your money.' 'Yes, but I have spent it all. Don't you think you could loan me a little? I shall have it to pay you back you know?' 'No,' said the mamma, thoughtfully, 'I'm afraid I can't do it. You have had your money and spent it, and now you will have to get along without it.'

The next Christmas the little girl wanted to make presents, and she had several dollars with which to do it. She is very careful now, and there is seldom as emergency which she has not cash on hand to meet, It is not a wealthy mother who does this but a woman who earns her own money and knows the value of it, as she wishes her little daughter to before she is obliged to from necessity.

This self-government plan is carried on in much of the little girl's life. It is partly necessary and partly undertaken as a rational system. The little girl sometimes asks not to learn her lessons, and she asks her mother for an excuse to the teacher. The mother writes something in this style:

Dear Miss Brown,—Alice has not her lessons this morning, and wishes me to ask you to excuse her. I do not know why she has not learned them. It would seem to me that she has had plenty of time. Very truly yours, ALICE'S MOTHER.

If this note is taken to the school by the little girl, another goes to the teacher from the mother, explanatory of the mother's method; and it assures the teacher that she wishes to co-operate with her, and that they are both working for the best interests of the little girl.

The other morning the little girl wished an excuse for tardiness. She was sure she could not get to school in time. This is the note the mother wrote to the teacher and read to the child:

Dear Miss Brown,—Alice wishes you to excuse her tardiness this morning. She has been slow about dressing and getting ready, and therefore will be late to school. Very truly yours, ALICE'S MOTHER.

But that did not suit the little 'girl who thought she must be late,' and she flew around, was dressed in time, and off to school without an excuse.—'Housewife.'

Avoid Coughing.

A physician who is connected with an institution in which there are many children, says: 'There is nothing more irritable to a cough than coughing. For some time I had been so fully assured of this that I determined for one minute at least to lessen the number of coughs heard in a certain ward in a hospital of the institution. By the promise of rewards and punishments I succeeded in inducing them simply to hold their breath when tempted to cough, and in a little while I was myself surprised to see how some of the children entirely recovered from the disease. Constant coughing is precisely like scratching a wound on the outside of the body; so long as it is done the wound will not heal. Let a person when tempted to cough draw a long breath and hold it until it warms and soothes every air cell, and some benefit will soon be received from this process. The nitrogen which is thus refined acts as an anodyne to the mucous membrane, allaying the desire to cough, and giving the throat and lungs a chance to heal. At the same time a suitable medicine will aid nature in her efforts to recuperate.'—'Presbyterian Banner.'

Hints on Health.

A Good Disinfectant.—A large uncovered vessel of water should stand in every sick room, and be frequently renewed. A convenient and safe place for it is under the bed. This water not only absorbs many impurities from the atmosphere, but softens and tempers it, On the same principle, one should never drink water that has stood uncovered in a sick room.

Plenty of Good Food.—If every workingwoman, says an exchange, would have a good breakfast of meat and potatoes, eggs and good bread, for lunch some warm drink, or milk and a few sandwiches, and for evening dinner a little soup or fish, meat and pudding, there would be less doctors' bills and more strength, color, and health. Half the people who think they are suffering from dyspepsia are only half-starved. The stomach is so seldom required to digest a full meal, that when the duty is enforced it is incapable of performing it. Good food, properly prepared, never hurts any one; poor food is an abomination.

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'Black Rock.'

The 'Northern Messenger' is a twelve page illustrated weekly, and is a fine budget for Sunday reading. Both young and old welcome it eagerly. It is specially interesting just now, as the famous Canadian story, 'Black Rock,' by Ralph Connor, in which are depicted the stirring experiences of a young minister among the miners and lumber men of a Rocky Mountain camp, has begun in this issue. To get this book in paper cover would cost fifty cents, and 'Messenger' subscribers will get the story serially, besides all the other good things which make the 'Messenger' so popular, for the small sum of 30c. a year.

If the 'Messenger' is not taken in your Sunday-school, would you not try to introduce it. We will make that easy by sending, free of charge, enough to give a copy to each teacher and scholar for several Sundays. If you will kindly drop us a card, giving the name of the school and the name and address of the superintendent and the quantity that would be distributed, we will gladly supply them.

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